

Reward System and Level of Staff Satisfaction among Non-Academic Staff of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: In any profit-oriented workplace, job relationship is seen as a trade procedure where workers give inputs in terms of skills and expertise for the different rewards, compensations and incentives from their employer which go far in deciding their satisfaction, performance and productivity. This study sought to examine the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by three (3) selected tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. Survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was 1122 staff drawn from the non-academic staff of the selected higher institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. A sample size of 415 was obtained using Taro Yamane's (1964) formula for finite population. Four hundred and fifteen (415) questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents who were non-academic staff members, after being validated by experts in academia and human resources management. Burley's proportional allocation was used to calculate proportionate sample size. Out of 415 copies administered, three hundred and one (301) copies were returned and used for the analysis. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test for the reliability of the instrument, an Alpha of 0.79 was obtained thus confirming the reliability of the instrument. The hypotheses formulated were tested using Z test. Findings from the study revealed that the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions is low (computed z-value of 24.385 against 1.645 and significance of 0.000) ($z = 24.385 >$ at $p < 0.05$) during the period studied. Based on the finding, the study concludes that the reward system implemented have a very strong correlation with the satisfaction of non-academic staff in the institutions of higher learning studied. In the light of the forgoing therefore, it was recommended that the reward systems implemented by the institutions should be consistent with staff needs and relevant to the personal life of the employee. Also, the reward system implemented should be reviewed at various levels to earn the employees' commitment and satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: *Reward systems, job satisfaction, promotion, benefits, Recognition*

I. INTRODUCTION

In any profit-oriented workplace, job relationship is seen as a trade procedure where workers give inputs in terms of skills and expertise consequently for the different rewards, compensations and incentives from the employer. The employer dependably has something to offer which the employee agrees to accept. Between the offer and acceptance, considerations are made for example, the employer's capacity to give the compensation, the employee's mandate to negotiate and the external governmental policies. A documented contract along these lines therefore turns into a formal Conditions of Service. From the point of view of the employee, pay has a critical impact on the standard of living, status, and security while less direct forms of rewards such as health care, pensions and other benefits also have an important impact on employees' well-being, satisfaction and general performance.

Creating an environment in which employees are productive is essential to increased profits for any organization, big or small. Organization profit-making is achieved by the coordinated effort of their members (Mullins, 2005). Imanyi (2000) opines that human resource is vital in any organization. Central to the growth, viability and survival of any organization be it private or public, manufacturing or non-manufacturing, is the effective staff utilization and maintenance of the human resources. Igboeli (1993:103-104) opines that few executives would argue with the fact that people are vital to the effective operation of an enterprise. No matter how efficient and sophisticated the machines, tools and equipments and no matter how vast the financial and material resources may be, somebody who is the human element will put them to use. Nnadozie and Nwana (1993:83) see employees as the most valuable resources of any organization.

Dixit and Bhati (2012) opine that poor reward system has been a major factor affecting employees' satisfaction, commitment and productivity. Adequate reward system will encourage employees to be proactive and have right attitude to work, thereby promoting organizational productivity (Armstrong, 2007). To avoid controversy and wrong perception among members of staff, it is important that reward system must be clearly communicated to them alongside with their specific tasks, this will drive the much needed motivation and satisfaction in the employees (Hartman, 2011). High level of staff satisfaction and performance are largely determined by the reward system put in place by the institution or organization (Osibanjo et al, 2012). It is not possible to have a good team of professionals in an organization without a good reward system and motivation platform. The level of their dissatisfaction of the staff is clearly seen in the frequent strike actions, nonchalant attitude of most non-academic staff towards their work in the tertiary institutions, their lateness to work, absenteeism, visiting hospitals and attending more to their family and personal issues and trade.

Therefore, this study sought to;

Examine the level of non-academic staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria.

The research attempted to provide answer to the question;

What is the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions under study?

To achieve the objective of the study, it was hypothesized that:

H₁: The level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions is low.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.2.1. Reward systems

Reward systems are policies that show clearly the guidelines to managing rewards. They provide financial and non-financial rewards and processes involved in evaluating the relative size and worth of jobs and placing the right staff on the right job based on individual performance. These policies ensure that staff are rewarded fairly, equitably and consistently with their input in the organization. The aim is to meet both the needs of the employees and the organization. A typical reward package should include base pay, commissions, overtime pay, bonuses, profit sharing, merit pay, stock options, travel and meals, housing allowance, benefits including dental, insurance, medical, vacation, leaves, retirement, tax freedom (Atchison, 2010; Noe, 1994; Milkovich and Newman, 1993; Gerhart and Milkovich, 1992)

Bernadin (2007) also argues that employee benefits, though a part of total reward system, embraces non-monetary forms of compensation ranging from healthcare plans to pension or retirement plans, social security, insurance, family and medical leave. Cascio (2003) indicates that reward packages such as severance pay, vacations and sabbatical, holidays and workers' compensation are legally mandated to be enjoyed by employees. However, these reward packages are often designed by organizations to enhance employees' job satisfaction and job performance. This includes all types of rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic, that are received as a result of employment by the employee. Intrinsic rewards include rewards within the job such as responsibility, autonomy, appreciation from the boss, scope to use and develop skills, training career, development opportunities, high quality leadership and feelings of accomplishment among others. Extrinsic rewards are tangible rewards like pay bonuses and fringe benefits. Pearce (2010) suggests that the direct reward method refers to monetary payments made to the employer for work done. Dessler (2011) refers to indirect reward as the indirect financial and non-financial payments employees receive for continuing their employment with the company which are an important part of every employee's reward. Management uses it ostensibly to facilitate its recruitment effort or influence the potential of employees coming to work for a company, influence their stay or create greater commitment, raise morale, reduce absenteeism in general and improve the strength of the organization by instituting a comprehensive programme in this area (Noe, 1996). Hence, the human resources management and organizational behaviour theories suggest that the appropriate use of people enhances organizational effectiveness (Arthur, 1994; Heskett, et al.1997; Tsui, et al 1997)

2.1.2 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined and measured as a concept of multi facets (Price, 1997). Job satisfaction is conceptualized as a degree of positive emotions towards a work role (Locke, 1976; Kallerberg 1977) and is related to some organizational outcomes such as, increased satisfaction of the customers (Rayn, et al, 1996), lower turnover (Mobley, 1977), increased response rate (Ryan, et al. 1996) and higher staff performance (Lauderweerd and Boumans, 1988). Researchers have tried to identify the various constituents of job satisfaction, examine the importance of each constituent and measure the effect these have on workers' productivity (Hong Lu, et al. 2005). Researchers have also argued that rewards offered by organisations impact on staff attitude and level of satisfaction towards their job (Lincon and Kallerberg 1990). Further Research also

suggests that intrinsic reward is usually salient for job involvement (Driscoll and Randall 1999), satisfaction with extrinsic reward leads to greater commitment with organization, better performance and customer satisfaction (O'Reilly, et al. 1991).

2.2 Theoretical Review

Most texts on social psychology divide theories of reward system into content and process theories. The former focuses on what are seen as fundamental human needs (for example, physiological, food and safety needs), while the latter tries to understand the psychological processes involved in motivation (Bowey and Thorpe 2000; Mullins 2001). Some of the theories therefore examined include:

Motivation Theories

On the issue of motivation, Gareth and George (2010) defines it as “a psychological force that determines the direction of a person’s behaviour in an organization, a person’s level of effort and a person’s level of persistence in the face of obstacles.” A need is a strong feeling of deficiency in some aspect of a person’s life that creates an uncomfortable tension. That tension becomes a motivating force, causing a person to take actions to satisfy the need, reduce the tension and diminish the intensity of the motivating force. The Need Theory suggests that individuals have certain physical and psychological needs that they attempt to satisfy.

Need Hierarchy Theory

One of the most popular theories of motivation today is Maslow’s Need Hierarchy Theory. Abraham Maslow (1987) posits that the human being is a ‘wanting animal’ motivated to satisfy certain types of needs. His theory is based on two premises – the first is that man’s needs are arranged in hierarchy of importance and thus when a person satisfies one need he will look up to the next higher order of needs. The second premise is that satisfied needs are no longer motivating. That is, as the lower needs of man are reasonably satisfied, they become less of a motivating force in a person’s behaviour. Maslow is famous for classifying human needs into five categories. As most basic needs, Physiological Needs (e.g. Food, water, air, sex) occupy the first level in Maslow’s hierarchy. People try to satisfy physiological needs before all others. For example, the primary motivation of a hungry person is to obtain food rather than say, gain recognition for achievements. Thus, people work for wages that will allow them to meet these needs first.

Security Needs include the desire for safety and stability and the absence of pain, threat and illness. People deprived of the means to satisfy security needs become pre-occupied with obtaining them. Many workers express their security needs as a desire for a stable job with adequate medical, unemployment and retirement benefits. Organizations that provide stability and such benefits are likely to have relatively low turnover and little dissatisfaction among employees who are striving to meet these needs.

Social or Affiliation Needs are the desire for friendship, love and belonging. This level of Maslow’s hierarchy represents a clear step up from the truly basic physiological and security needs. Employees with low affiliation needs may be content to work on tasks by themselves. When an organization does not meet affiliation needs, an employee’s dissatisfaction may be expressed in terms of frequent absenteeism, low productivity, stress-related behaviours and even emotional breakdown.

Esteem Needs are the desire for self-respect, a sense of personal achievement and recognition from others. To satisfy these needs, people seek opportunities for achievement, promotion, prestige and status, all of which symbolize their competence and worth. Managers may publicly reward through achievement lists, bonuses, praise, lapel pins and articles in the organization’s Newsletters. These and other forms of recognition help build employee pride. When the need for esteem is dominant, managers can promote job satisfaction and high quality performance by providing opportunities for exciting, challenging work and recognition for accomplishments.

Self-actualization Needs are the desire for personal growth, self-fulfillment and realization of the individual’s full potential. Traits commonly exhibited include initiative, spontaneity and problem-solving ability. Managers who recognize this motivation in employees can help them discover the growth opportunities available in their jobs, or they can create special growth opportunities. According to Maslow, the needs which are largely unsatisfied tend to produce tensions within individuals which lead them to behave in a certain fashion in the hope of reducing the tension and restoring the internal equilibrium. Based on Maslow’s theory, some researchers have viewed job satisfaction from a need fulfillment perspective (Kuhlen, 1963; Worf, 1970).

Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Amedzo (2007) discussed Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory. According to him, Herzberg started his theory with a distinction between motivational and maintenance factors in job situations. A research study was made by Herzberg and his associates based on the interview of 200 engineers and accountants who worked in eleven different firms in the Pittsburgh area. On the basis of this research, two job factors were identified, namely, Intrinsic factors named motivators or satisfiers and extrinsic factors named hygiene or maintenance factors.

The Maintenance or Hygiene factors are found to be dissatisfiers, they are Company Policy and Administration, Technical supervision, Interpersonal relationship with supervisors, Interpersonal relationship with peers and Interpersonal relationship with subordinates. The rest are Salary, Job security, Personal life, Working conditions and Status. The Motivational Factors consists of Achievement, Recognition, Advancement, Work itself, Possibility of growth and Responsibility are Satisfiers. Management traditionally perceives many of these factors as motivators but these are really more potent as dissatisfiers. The dissatisfiers bring motivation up to zero state. The opposite of dissatisfaction is not satisfaction but simply, no-satisfaction. To motivate workers to put in their best, management must give proper attention to the motivators or growth factors.

Herzberg emphasizes that hygiene factors are not a "second-class citizen system". They are as important as motivators, but for different reasons. Hygiene factors are necessary to avoid unpleasantness at work and to deny unfair treatment. Management should never deny people proper treatment at work. The motivators relate to what people are allowed to do at work. They are the variables which actually motive people.

The motivation-hygiene theory has extended Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and is more directly applicable to the work situation. Herzberg's theory suggests that if management is to provide positive motivation then attention must be given not only to hygiene factors, but also to the motivating factors (in this case, the non-financial aspects of Indirect Reward). The work of Herzberg indicates that it is more likely good performance leads to job satisfaction rather than the reverse. In linking Herzberg's theory to the work situation, management should ensure that they implement their Indirect Reward System by providing opportunities for further training, recognizing long service, promotion, etc. since these motivate workers, leads to higher performance and productivity helps in reducing turnover and a high level of staff satisfaction.

Equity Theory

Equity theory holds that a person must see a relationship between the rewards he obtains and the amount of work required for getting them. When such a balance between inputs and outputs does not exist, the person will attempt to restore it by working more or less efficiently or by trying to obtain greater rewards. His judgment of balance is usually based on how his situation compares with that of some other employee considered equal. Nevertheless, employees' perceptions of inequity are expected to cause them to take actions such as absenteeism and lateness; and accounts for low levels of employees' morale, organisational commitment, involvement which eventually lead to poor employee's performance and dissatisfaction. Equity theory argues that, for employees to increase their job performance, organisations should reward high performance (Morgan and Rao, 2002).

Exchange Theory

Exchange theory focuses on organizational behaviour in terms of the rewards and costs incurred in the interaction between employers and employees. There are four concepts embracing this, the rewards, costs, outcomes and level of comparisons (Armstrong, 2006:206 – 207).

2.3 Empirical Review

Hasibuan (2003) opines that job satisfaction is an emotional attitude reflected by the morale, discipline and work performance. An empirical study conducted by Alsabari (2012) in the banking sector shows that banking services are highly competitive and banks regardless of size, technology and market forces are facing employee retention challenges. He concludes that to overcome this challenge banks must focus more on employees' satisfaction and motivate them to increase the effectiveness of banks. He references rewards and recognition as essential factors in enhancing employees' job satisfaction and work motivation which is directly associated to organizational achievement. The findings made by Mathis and Jackson (2000) indicate that one way used by management to improve the performance, to motivate and to increase employees' job satisfaction is through Reward System.

Shrivastava & Purang (2009) conducted a study on 340 employees of both publican and private sector banks to examine their job satisfaction level and found that private sector bank employees perceive greater satisfaction

with pay, social, and growth aspects of job as compared to public sector bank employees. On the other hand, public sector bank employees have expressed greater satisfaction with job security as compared to private sector bank employees. Redmond (2014) examined the perspectives of job satisfaction and found job characteristics, dispositional work characteristics, reward and life satisfaction as predictors of job satisfaction in Canada.

Another study conducted by Probst & Brubaker (2001), indicated that the difference between job satisfaction and dissatisfaction lies in the employees and the amount and type of rewards that the employee expects that their contribution and efforts should warrant. Prasetya and Kato (2011) in their analysis revealed that there are significant influences from both financial and non-financial reward on the satisfaction of an employee. Spicer (2010) used a sample of 268 managers across the United Kingdom and Europe and found that interesting work, reward, job security, full appreciation of work done and good wages to be major predictors of job satisfaction.

Ting (2007) tried to determine the levels of cooperation of media specialists and public librarians. A significant correlation was shown between the level of satisfaction and socio-demography, although librarians in public libraries showed greater satisfaction. Hughes (2007) surveyed 2000 employees from various organizations and industries in multiple levels. The reported results of these surveys showed that nine out of ten believed that the socio-demographic influences in their organizations affect the attitude of employees and increases their performance. It was also seen that employees in different organizations have different and unique work environment which affect them.

Voydanoff (2000) examined the job satisfaction of academic librarians as it related to faculty status. The findings indicate that librarians with academic rank were more satisfied than non-faculty groups. Predictors of satisfaction included perceptions of participation and salary. Similarly, the result of some other studies have shown meaningful relations between job satisfaction and wages, management policy, working conditions, possibilities of promotion, gaining respect, the size of the organization, self-development and achievement of the use of talents (Ergenc, 1982a; Sencer, 1982; Kose, 1985; Yincir, 1990). Philips (1994) studied the career attitudes of 109 master level librarians and the relationship between age, career satisfaction and career identity. His results indicate that over time librarians become happier with their profession and more committed to their line of work.

The work of Hill (2014) posited 'what are the factors affecting job satisfaction?' Based on comparable methodologies, his study which was domiciled in the United States found that with regards to the issue of the internal work environment, working conditions, opportunity for advancement, workload and stress levels, respect from co-workers, relationship with supervisors and financial rewards were the predictors of job satisfaction. The result of this study correlates with the findings of Karsh, Booske & Saintfort (2007) who studied job and organizational determinants of nursing home employee commitment, job satisfaction and intent to turnover. Having sampled a total of 6584 nursing home employees from 76 nursing homes in mid-western United States with questionnaire, they found that socio-demographic factors predicted commitment and satisfaction while commitment and satisfaction predicted turnover intentions.

Robles-García, Dierssen-Sotos, Martínez-Ochoa, Herrera-Carral, Díaz-Mendi & Llorca-Díaz (2005) examined variables related to job satisfaction applying cross-sectional study using the European Foundation for Quality Management [EFQM] model. The main objective was to identify the influence of the dimensions of people items and socio-demographic characteristics included in the EFQM model on high satisfaction of healthcare workers in a district hospital. The questionnaire used was the personal satisfaction survey of the Basque Country (Spain). The outcome measure was a high degree of satisfaction (75th percentile or higher). Independent variables were socio-demographic and organizational characteristics. The association among variables was assessed using odds ratios (OR) and their 95% confidence interval (CI). Adjustment for confounders was performed by unconditional logistic regression. They found that on a scale from 0 to 10, the mean general satisfaction score was 5.95 (standard deviation, 2). Twenty-five percent of workers gave their general satisfaction with the organizational climate a score of 8 or more points. The most positively considered features were the environmental policy, hierarchical relations, promotion, and professional development. The most negatively viewed items were salary, knowledge and identification of objectives, and training. The variables most closely related to outcome were a favorable perception of training (adjusted OR = 5.04; 95% CI, 2.16-11.77) and recognition of the work performed (adjusted OR = 4.68; 95% CI, 2.20-10.08). Socio-demographic factors had less influence on satisfaction.

Azeem (2010) investigated the impact of demographic factors and job satisfaction facets on organizational commitment using a sample of 128 employees from service industry selected randomly. Employees were given a Job Descriptive Index (JDI) questionnaire and the Organizational Commitment questionnaire (OCQ). Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were used to analyze the data. Results of the study showed that a moderate significant positive relationship was found among job satisfaction facets, demographic factors, and organizational commitment. Supervision, pay, overall job satisfaction, age, and job tenure were the significant predictors of organizational commitment.

Bashir and Ramay (2008) examined the relationship between career opportunities, work life policies, job characteristics and job satisfaction of Information technology professionals in Pakistan. The results show that work life policies and job characteristics are significantly correlated with job satisfaction while career opportunities did not determine their job satisfaction. Their study concludes that organizations will have to devise more family friendly policies and provide opportunities for career development to IT professionals to induce job satisfaction.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey design. The population of the study was 1122 staff drawn from the non-academic staff of the selected higher institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. The institutions were, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) and Enugu State College of Education, Technical (ESCET), Enugu State. A sample size of 415 was obtained using Taro Yamane's (1964) formula for finite population. Four hundred and fifteen (415) questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents after being validated by experts in academia and human resources management. Burley's proportional allocation was used to calculate proportionate sample size. Out of 415 copies administered, three hundred and one (301) copies were returned and used for the analysis. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. The hypothesis was tested using +Z test. The instrument was subjected to Content validity and reliability tests. The reliability test showed a Cronbach Alpha of 0.79. This being greater than 0.7 indicate that the reliability of the test instrument is very strong. The Analyses were done at 5% level of significance.

IV. ANALYSIS

A total of 415 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, out of which a total of 301 copies were retrieved from the respondents. This is shown in the table 1 below

Table 1: To assess the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions.

S/N	To assess the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions.	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	The overriding method of compensation in our institution is direct compensation (financial – salary)	184	90	9	6	12
2.	Promotion, bonus and reward influences my job satisfaction levels	187	96	3	6	9
3	I am very satisfied with our compensation method	7	9	44	123	118
4	My colleagues elsewhere earn higher than I do.	61	90	21	84	45

Source: Data from Fieldwork (2014)

The table (1) shows the responses to the Likert Scale questions bordering on the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions. The table shows the responses in frequency counts out of the 301 respondents. For the question on the overriding method of compensation in our institution is direct compensation (financial – salary), the responses were Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively. The responses yielded frequencies of 184 (SA), 90 (A), 9 (UD), 6 (D) and 12 (SD) out of the 301 respondents respectively. For the question concerning the influence of promotion, bonus and reward on job satisfaction levels, the responses also were strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (UD), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD).

For the question on level of satisfaction with compensation method, the responses were Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (UD), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The responses of the respondents yielded frequencies of 7 (SA), 9 (A), 44 (UD), 123 (D) and 118 (SD) respectively. For the question on the comparison with what obtains elsewhere, the responses of the respondents were Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (UD), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The responses of the respondents gave frequencies of 61 (SA), 90 (A), 21 (UD), 84 (D) and 45 (SD) respectively.

4.1. Test of Hypothesis

The hypotheses postulated were tested using Z test, the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

H_0 : The level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions is not low

H_1 : The level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions not low

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions	301	4.190	1.045	1.00	5.00

		level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions
N		301
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	4.190
	Std. Deviation	1.045
Most Extreme	Absolute	.314
Most Extreme	Positive	.314
Differences	Negative	-.159
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		24.385
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

a. Test distribution is Normal

b. Calculated from data

Source: SPSS Output

From table above the computed z-value of 24.385 against 1.645 and significance of 0.000 can be seen. By implication, the null hypothesis should be rejected and alternate accepted. This is an indication that the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions is low.

V. DISCUSSION

From the result displayed in the z-test table, Z-value is 24.385 against 1.645 and significance of 0.000 ($z = 24.385 >$ at $p < 0.05$). This result indicates that the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented is low. The result of this study agrees with the work done by Prasetya & Kato (2011) who argue that there are significant influences from both financial and non-financial rewards on the satisfaction of an employee. However, our study contradicts the result of Shrivastava & Purang (2009) who found that employees perceive greater satisfaction with pay, social, and growth aspects of job. Their assertion disagrees with the findings of this study. Information obtained from the interview corroborates the finding of this study.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the analysis performed on the generated data, it was found that the level of staff satisfaction with the reward system implemented by the tertiary institutions is low. The reward system applied by the institutions should be consistent with staff needs. Unions should be involved to an extent in clarifying what really will elevate the level of employee satisfaction with the reward system. However, caution should be applied in dealing with the unions so as not to prolong the process. Salary should be fair and relevant. There should be transparency in remuneration exercises to ensure a climate of mutual trust and cooperation. This gives the employee a sense of belonging that the organization is fair. Further study should be replicated in other geographical areas.

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